

side-spots somewhat triangular. Under wing-coverts rusty red mixed with pale red.

One specimen of the same hybrid has been previously procured in Sweden. On the 12th February, 1859, a Thrush was caught at Haga, near Stockholm, which, during the course of the following year, was described by Meves* as *Turdus illuminus* Löbenstein†.

This specimen is still preserved in the Riks Museum, Stockholm. Through the courtesy of Prof. Smitt, I have just been enabled to make a direct comparison between it and the present specimen from Gudbranddalen, and there can be no doubt that they are identical. They are of the same size. According to Meves, the Stockholm specimen measured:—Total length, 255 millim.; length of wing, 127; length of tail, 89.

The lower parts of the Swedish specimen, including the under wing-coverts, resemble the Norwegian bird, even to the smallest details. The upper parts of the Swedish bird are a trifle darker brown than in the Norwegian specimen.

Christiania, Feb. 15th, 1898.

XXIX.—*The Birds of a Bangkok Garden.*

By S. S. FLOWER, F.Z.S., Royal Siamese Museum.

THE Wang Na, the old palace of the second King of Siam, occupies a large piece of ground in the inner city of Bangkok. This was once a place of great pomp and magnificence; to-day its glories have departed. No longer a potentate holds court "with a standing of white elephants on the right side, and of white horses on the left," but weeds grow in profusion where they will, bats and owls occupy the ruined buildings, the long rows of barrack-rooms are empty, and the cannon lie on the ground amid the mouldering remains of their carriages. During last year the outer walls

* Öfv. Kgl. Vet.-Akad. Förh. Årg. 17, No. 4, p. 202 (Stockh. 1861); The Ibis, 1862, p. 182.

† 'Naumannia,' Bd. ii. p. 80 (Stuttgart, 1852).

have been demolished, and the Wang Na has thus been greatly reduced in area, but the inner walls, though threatened, still remain. Within them is a delightful old garden, surrounding two buildings, once the Audience Hall and private Wat (temple) of the old Second King, now the Royal Siamese Museum. Here an old house, forming part of the walls of this inner compound, has for a year been my home: a place of almost idyllic quietude, separated from the noise and troubles of the outside world by high though crumbling walls and by great iron-studded gates of teak. Here, in the heart of the great town, is a paradise for birds, as no gun is allowed to be fired within the walls, there is food in plenty, and cats are not encouraged. The following species of birds have been noted as resorting to it:—

1. CORVUS MACRORHYNCHIUS Wagler.

The Black Crows are the most noticeable Bangkok birds, and the Wang Na seems to be their headquarters. All day long they are busy acting as scavengers in the city, in the town without the walls, and among the shipping on the river, but towards sunset they come flying home from all directions and settle on the roofs in hundreds. One week the roof of one building is their favourite resort, and as many Crows as can find standing-room perch along the ridge, while others fly round trying to find room; next week sometimes the fashion has changed, and another roof is crowded while the old one is deserted. Till well after the sun is set they keep up a tremendous clamour, as if each bird was recounting its exploits of the past day, quite regardless of the fact that every other bird is doing the same and none listening. Then when it becomes dark they leave the roofs and settle in some big trees where they pass the night, and the noise gradually subsides. On moonlight nights they continue talking much later than on dark nights, and any unusual noise wakes them, when they fly out, making a sudden rushing sound with their wings that has been mistaken more than once for the sound of one of the old buildings falling down (an event that sometimes

happens during the rains). When, in June 1897, part of the King's palace was burnt down, the first news I had of it was from the Crows, the sudden cawing of which in the middle of the night induced me to get up to find the cause, before either the fire-bugles sounded or the alarm-guns were discharged.

Hot weather, rain, and cold weather seem to make no difference to them; they are always lively, happy-looking, inquisitive, and busy. Unfortunately they are very destructive and of iconoclastic tendencies; the old carvings in the Wang Na above the gateways and on gable-ends suffer greatly. The Crows break off projections of plaster or wood, and particularly delight in picking out the bits of glass which are inlaid in the ornamental exterior woodwork of these Siamese buildings; but to the roofs they do most material damage, pulling out the tiles, apparently in order to hear them clatter and break on the flagstones below. It is most amusing to watch a party of three or four Crows and see what pains they take about their self-imposed work of demolition. In the estimates of the Royal Siamese Museum for next year a special sum has to be inserted for repairing damage done by the Crows.

The first morning we occupied our house we threw out food for the birds, and a flock of Crows came to get what they could of it; but next morning one pair kept all the rest away, and since then for more than a year these two Crows have, as it were, taken the house under their protection, and no other Crow is ever suffered by them to come for food or even to settle within biscuit-throw of the windows. They, on their part, never wander far away, and though they may not be visible, yet whenever we call them they soon come flying up. Though they are only fed at mealtimes, they occasionally come to the windows at other times, evidently not expecting food, but as if for good fellowship and to see that all is going well. It is curious why these two particular birds should have decided to make me their friend. They will sometimes, when I am returning home from a walk, welcome me before I reach the house, and when I have been

going out one has flown as far as the gate and perched there, cawing, as much as to say "good-bye." That they recognize individuals there is no doubt, treating my wife and myself with confidence, but distrusting the servants and strangers.

They nested last spring in a big tree on the lawn in front of the house, and as soon as their two young birds could fly the old pair brought them over and we threw them food. This went on till the young ones could quite look after themselves, when the parents one day drove them off and they never returned. After absences of six and eight weeks respectively, during which the house was shut up, the very first morning we were back the pair of Crows were at the window as usual. The old birds were beginning to collect pieces of wood for nest-building as early as the 5th of January; the young birds were flying about by the last week in April.

2. *PYCNONOTUS* sp. inc.

A brown inconspicuous Bulbul, which frequents the thickest-leaved trees and is very shy.

3. *DICRURUS* sp. inc.

A King-Crow is sometimes seen in the garden, but whether it is *D. ater* or *D. annectens* I am not certain.

4. *DISSEMURUS PARADISEUS* (Linn.).

The Racket-tailed King-Crows, though so common in the country, are unfortunately rare visitors in our compound, as they are the finest songsters we have. We notice them occasionally in May and June. They well deserve the name of "King-Crow," for one of them will chase an unfortunate Crow about the garden for a long time. Why the Crows let themselves be harried and bullied by these comparatively little birds I cannot imagine.

5. *ORTHOTOMUS SUTORIUS* (Forst.).

The Tailor-bird lives all the year round in the Wang Na, and is one of our commonest birds, graceful in its movements and uttering a loud cheerful chirping.

6. *ORIOLUS* sp. inc.

A Golden Oriole has twice been seen and heard in the garden, once in January and once in November.

7. *GRACUPICA NIGRICOLLIS* (Payk.).

The Black-necked Mynah can be seen here all the year round in greater numbers than any other bird, except the Crows and Sparrows. They spend most of their time walking in small parties on the grass-lawns in search of food, and are very tame. Their handsome plumage generally attracts the attention of visitors, and we have few better songsters. They sing both when on the ground and when perched on the branch of a tree, and make a great parade when singing, puffing out the chest and opening the mouth very wide. The young birds made their appearance on the lawns with their parents in the first week in July; their brownish heads and necks give them a very different appearance from the old birds. Both this and the next species make amusing and cheerful pets, and thrive in a cage.

8. *ÆTHIOPSAR GRANDIS* (Moore).

The Siamese Mynah is also a regular inhabitant of the Wang Na. The crest of black feathers above the yellow bill, their glossy black plumage, cheerful notes, and lively ways make them very attractive birds to have about the garden. They also must do good in catching and eating a large number of insects—even a passing mosquito they will snap up; but worms, bits of meat, crumbs, fruit, and rice also form part of their food. When a party of Crows are feeding it is amusing to see these cheeky little birds trying to join in and getting repeatedly chased away by the Crows.

9. *COPSYCHUS SAULARIS* (Linn.).

The Magpie-Robin is another of our best songsters and one of our commonest birds. It is very tame and not unfrequently enters the house.

10. *MUNIA ATRICAPILLA* (Vieill.).

On the 11th of June I saw a solitary Finch, I believe of this species, in our garden.

11. *PASSER MONTANUS* (Linn.).

The Tree-Sparrow is the commonest bird in Bangkok; it has the habits of *P. domesticus* of Europe, but is even bolder. At every meal during daylight these birds enter the dining-room and hop about on the lookout for food, perching on the sideboard and even on the chairs.

12. *HIRUNDO* sp. inc.

A Swallow resembling our *H. rustica* is sometimes seen on the wing; I find it mentioned in my diary for the months of January, February, August, November, and December.

13. *MOTACILLA* sp. inc.

A Pied Wagtail is common about the lawns of the Wang Na in December and January.

14. *ANTHUS* sp. inc.

A Pipit is another winter visitor, and is to be seen on the grass-lawns in company with the Wagtail, but it stays with us longer. I have observed it from the 30th October to February.

15. *ARACHNECHTHRA FLAMMAXILLARIS* (Blyth).

This beautiful Sun-bird is common in a row of trees just outside our house, and can easily be watched from the open upstairs windows within the distance of a few feet. Oates, in the 'Fauna of British India, Birds' (vol. ii. p. 343), says of the Nectariniidæ that "they are unable to poise themselves in the air, after the manner of Humming-birds, except on rare occasions, and then only for a very brief interval"; but I have repeatedly noticed this species thus poised in one spot with rapidly-vibrating wings, and although they never remain so for long, still it is a characteristic attitude of the bird. Their voice, though very shrill, is pretty. Young birds just able to fly were first noticed on the 14th of August.

16. *DICÆUM CRUENTATUM* (Linn.).

The Scarlet-backed Flowerpecker lives in the same trees as the Sun-bird, though it is not so often seen. It has the same habit of hovering or poising itself in the air. It is

most fascinating to watch examples of these two lovely species playing about in the same branches, the throat of the cock Sun-bird showing wonderful metallic shades of blue and purple, while the cock Flowerpecker's plumage is brilliant with crimson and black. The Tailor-bird is often with them, the three together forming as delightful a trio of elegant little birds as can be imagined.

17. *DENDROCOPIUS PECTORALIS* (Blyth).

This Pied Woodpecker is common in Bangkok. I have noticed it not only in the Wang Na, but also in some of the old temple-enclosures busily examining the more or less rotten ornamental woodwork surmounting the buildings. It also comes to the trees by our windows, and will spend a long time on their trunks in search of food. When thus engaged it sits with tail strongly pressed to the wood, legs spread out almost at *right angles* to the body, and the head thrown well back to gain impetus for pecking.

18. *XANTHOLEMA HEMATOCEPHALA* (P. L. S. Müll.).

The "Coppersmith," as I write, is keeping up its incessant monotonous call of "pook, pook, pook, pook, pook, pook," which is one of the commonest sounds to be heard in the Wang Na. It selects the top of the tallest trees to sit in, and it is wonderful how long it can keep up its noise, as the jerking of its head at each "pook" seems a great effort to the little bird.

19. *CORACIAS AFFINIS* McClelland.

The Burmese Roller is one of the few birds here which most Europeans have a name for, calling it the "Blue Jay," although I have more than once been told, "Of course it is really a Kingfisher, you know." Two or three of these birds live in our garden, and have their regular posts of observation on the corner of a deserted building or a projecting branch of a tree. Sometimes they assemble in one of the trees by the house, and make a tremendous noise screaming and chattering to each other. I have noticed a Roller and a Drongo (*Dicrurus*) both trying to catch the same butterfly in the air.

20. *EUDYNAMIS HONORATA* (Linn.).

I have not yet seen a Koel in the Wang Na, but several times have heard its well-known cry. It is a common bird in the country districts round Bangkok.

21. *STRIX FLAMMEA* Linn.

The Barn-Owl is very numerous here; one cannot walk out at twilight without noticing one or more either flying silently by or else perched on some old carved pinnacle, looking very picturesque in silhouette against the afterglow. An evening sketch of the Royal Siamese Museum would hardly be complete without having at least one finial surmounted by an Owl. In our house these Owls are a decided nuisance; night after night they will come into the rooms and perch on the punkahs and furniture. I have several times, on awaking, found an Owl perched on the frame of my bed. Besides being dirty, they are a source of possible danger from fire, and some evenings we have had to extinguish the paraffin-lamp, as an Owl would make repeated dashes at the light and might at any moment overturn it. In London it is difficult to imagine this sort of thing, and other results of the animals that share one's rooms here; for instance, having to put the pictures straight which the long geckoes running on the walls have pushed askew. When an Owl happens to be abroad during the day it has a very bad reception from the Crows. We have observed this several times. One afternoon in April a Barn-Owl flew across the compound, pursued by four Crows; it flew into our house with such force that it killed itself by dashing against the opposite wall.

22. *SCOPS BAKKAMÆNA* (Pennant).

The Collared Scops-Owl also lives in our garden, and sometimes comes into the house in the evening. They are pretty little birds, and we have generally seen two together, sitting close side by side, on the branch of a tree. They make a noise like very loud snoring, and an incident that came to my notice illustrates how much it sounds like the

snore of a human being in uneasy slumber. A new arrival in Bangkok told me how he had been annoyed by some man sleeping just outside his window who would snore horribly, and when he told his Chinese servant to wake the disturber, the "boy" insisted "that all same belong one bird," which incensed him further, till I told him the "boy" was right.

23. *VULTUR* sp. inc.

A Vulture was seen perched on one of the museum roofs one afternoon in February. This is the only time we have seen one in the Wang Na.

24. *HALIASTUR INDUS* (Bodd.) }

25. *MILVUS GOVINDA* Sykes. }

These two Kites, though both numerous along the river and canals of Bangkok, never enter the garden. Although they are occasionally seen flying overhead, I have not once seen one settle on a building or tree in the Wang Na. When there has been much meat about, as, for instance, when skinning a rhinoceros or bear, I have been surprised that no Kites (nor Vultures) should have come down for a share, as they would in an Indian city. Here the Crows have the whole of the scraps to themselves.

26. *TINNUNCULUS* sp. inc.

A Hawk, apparently a Kestrel, frequented the garden for a few days at the end of October and beginning of November.

27. *TURTUR* sp. inc.

A Dove occasionally visits certain trees, but is very shy, keeping itself hidden among the foliage.

28. During the winter months, generally towards evening, we have seen parties of White Egrets flying high overhead.